

From: Alicia Graham [mailto:aliciag@seattlechamber.com]
Sent: Wednesday, March 24, 2010 2:54 PM
To: SR 520 Bridge SDEIS
Cc: mweed@mainstreetep.com; elizabeth.j.warman@boeing.com; Charles Knutson; Phil Bussey; mdaudon@snwsc.com
Subject: Greater Seattle Chamber's Comment on SR 520 Bridge Replacement SDEIS

Hello,

Please find attached a letter from the Greater Seattle Chamber of Commerce, responding to the supplemental draft EIS for the SR 520, I-5 to Medina: Bridge Replacement and HOV Project. We are sending a hard copy as well to Jenifer Young.

Thank you,
Alicia

Alicia Graham
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March 24, 2010

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Washington State Department of Transportation
Attn: Jenifer Young
Environmental Manager
SR 520 Program Office
600 Stewart St., Suite 520
Seattle, WA 98101

Dear Ms. Young,

C-009-001

The Greater Seattle Chamber supports the December 2009 findings of the Legislative Workgroup supporting Option A+ for the Westside landing and overall funding of the SR 520 bridge replacement. We believe that this option will improve our transportation infrastructure and balance many community and environmental needs while preserving our region's economic vitality.

This option, derived from Option A with Sub-Options in the Supplemental Draft Environmental Impact Statement, provides strong transit connections and congestion relief. It provides a good mix of traffic mitigation for Lake Washington and Montlake Boulevards, and it improves connections to the north to areas such as the University District, University Village and Seattle Children's Hospital. Decreased congestion in these areas translates to faster, more reliable transit service and also improves freight mobility in the corridor. The A+ Option also anticipates and allows for future capacity improvements.

In addition, the A+ Option reduces and reasonably mitigates construction and operating impacts on the environment, residents and adjacent businesses and facilities. It would largely be built within the existing footprint, avoiding costly right-of way acquisitions. This option also greatly reduces the need for excavation and storing of soils, has fewer archeological, shoreline and direct shading impacts and is likely more permitable.

Most importantly, the A+ Option is cost-effective. The Option stays within budget and respects the \$4.65 billion cap established by the state legislature for expenditures. It avoids expensive extras and technical challenges, and can be designed and constructed minimizing excessive risk. This option best serves major employers and their commuters as well as freight and delivery movement, and recognizes the importance of preserving the SR 520 corridor and keeping it safe for its many thousands of daily travelers.

The A+ Option offers a fresh and innovative solution, supported by many stakeholders, that best balances capacity, transit, community and economic considerations. Most of all, the option offers a path forward for a project that has been plagued by impasse and deadlock for many years. For these reasons, the Greater Seattle Chamber of Commerce strongly supports Option A+ to replace the SR 520 bridge.

Sincerely,

Mark Weed
Chair, Transportation Committee

Elizabeth Warman
Vice Chair, Transportation Committee

C-009-001

WSDOT received a number of comments both in support of and in opposition to Options A, K, and L and the associated suboptions. These comments are summarized in the Supplemental Draft Environmental Impact Statement Summary of Comments that was published in April 2010 and is available at <http://www.wsdot.wa.gov/Projects/SR520Bridge/SDEIS.htm>.

Since the SDEIS was published, FHWA and WSDOT have developed a Preferred Alternative that is similar to Option A, but includes a number of design refinements that that respond to community and stakeholder reaction to the SDEIS. The Preferred Alternative would improve mobility and safety while avoiding and minimizing environmental and community effects to the resources of the SR 520 environs. Please see Chapter 2 of the Final EIS for a description of the Preferred Alternative design and Chapters 5 and 6 for discussions of the environmental benefits and consequences it poses.